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A Guide to Soy Foods

By Georgia Jones and Wanda Koszewski, Extension Nutrition Specialists

Soy Foods

Soy foods come in several forms: traditional, second-generation, and “hidden” soy products. Traditional soy products include tofu, soy nuts and soy flour. Second-generation soy products are meant to imitate a meat or dairy product and include soy cheese, ice cream and meat analogs. “Hidden” soy products are usually traditional foods that have added soy and include pasta, cookies and cereals.

Soy Foods

Description

Traditional Soy Products

Soy nuts	Roasted, mature soybeans. These may contain additional fat and salt. Check the label to determine if additional oil was used. One-third of a cup has 20 grams of protein.
Edamame(ed-ah-MAH-may)	Immature (green) soybeans. This variety of soybeans can be eaten raw, which makes them different from regular soybeans. Edamame has a flavor similar to baby lima beans. One cup of edamame has 25 grams of protein.
Miso	Fermented soy paste that has the consistency of peanut butter. It is used primarily as a flavoring for soups, marinades and salad dressing in Japanese cooking. Miso is very high in sodium and therefore is not a good way to get protein.
Soy flour	Used to increase the protein of breads, cakes and cookies. One fourth of a cup contains 8 to 12 grams of protein. Since soy contains no gluten, it cannot be used to replace all of the wheat flour. In yeast-raised breads, place two tablespoon of soy flour in the measuring cup, finish off the cup with wheat flour. In quick breads, replace up to 1/4 of the wheat flour with soy flour. Breads made with soy flour tend to brown quicker.
Soy milk	Made by soaking soy beans. Some of them have added sugar, which may be a source of increased calories. Protein content is usually 6 to 10 grams per 8 ounces. The amount of calcium in soy milk varies a lot, so check the label before purchasing.
Soy sauce	A fermented sauce made from soy, wheat and/or barley. Sodium content is high and it has no isoflavones.
Tofu	Sometimes called soybean curd. Contains 9 to 20 grams of protein per cup.

Second Generation Soy Products

Meat analogs	Soy burgers, hot dogs, bacon, sausage and ground beef. Contain mostly soy, but may also contain wheat.
Soy butter	A spread made from soybeans, similar to peanut butter.

Soy cheese	Contains 6 grams of protein per ounce. However, most of the protein is from caseinate, a milk protein found in dairy cheese. Soy cheese contains about 6 - 7 mg isoflavones per 100 grams of cheese.
Soy ice cream	Has very little soy protein, but a lot of sugar.
Soy margarine	Made from soybean oil and contains no protein. It is sometimes labeled as vegetable oil. It is a fat and contains 9 calories per gram. There are also reduced fat soy margarines.
Soy yogurt	Usually sold as “cultured soy.” Contains about 5 grams of protein per 6 ounces.
Textured Soy Protein	A meat substitute, has the protein content of tempeh, but a milder flavor. Product may be labeled as texturized vegetable protein (TVP).

“Hidden” Soy Products

Cereals	Usually made by adding soy protein to the cereal mix. Two products currently on the market are Quaker Oats — Nutrition for Women and General Mills — Harmony. Both products contain 2 grams of soy protein per serving.
Baked goods, pastas, breads, etc.	Either soy flour is used to replace part of the wheat flour or soy protein is added.
Protein bars	Usually soy is added along with other forms of protein. Bars vary a lot in their soy protein content, so check the label.
Soy drinks	Soy is usually added in the form of a powder.

How to Add Soy Foods Into Your Diet

Add soy foods into your diet in a number of ways. Use soy flour to thicken gravies and sauces. Add soy milk to baked goods and desserts. Here are some other helpful tips.

- Include soy-based beverages, muffins, sausages, yogurt, or cream cheese at breakfast.
- Use soy deli meats, soy nut butter, or add soy cheese to sandwiches.
- Top pizza or lasagna with soy cheese, pepperoni, sausages or “crumbles” (resembles ground beef).
- Grill soy hot dogs, burgers, marinated tempeh and baked tofu. Add barbecue sauce for flavor.

- Use tofu in stir fry, salads and soup.
- Pour soymilk on cereals or use it to make smoothies.
- Eat roasted soy nuts or a soy protein bar for a snack.

Begin by adding soy slowly until you get use to the texture and taste. After you have become accustomed to soy, gradually increase your consumption to 25 grams per day.

Resources of Soy and Recipes

American Soybean Association
www.amsoy.org

United Soybean Board
www.talksoy.com or www.soyfoods.com

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